

# COURTS

## DESCRIPTION

The Chesterfield County court system is the Twelfth Judicial District of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is comprised of the General District Court, the Circuit Court, and the Juvenile and Domestic

Relations (JDR) Court. The state funds salaries and benefits for each judge in the system. These judges handle a diverse caseload ranging from felony trials to traffic cases to child support disputes.

## FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

			FY2004		Change			
	FY2002	FY2003	Biennial	FY2004	FY2003 to	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007
	Actual	Adopted	Planned	Adopted	FY2004	Projected	Projected	Projected
<b>Circuit Court</b>	\$490,931	\$521,900	\$523,400	\$528,400	1.2%	\$528,400	\$528,400	\$528,400
<b>General District</b>	62,585	72,400	72,400	76,900	6.2%	76,900	76,900	76,900
<b>JDR Court</b>	<u>74,325</u>	<u>93,000</u>	<u>72,400</u>	<u>93,000</u>	0.0%	<u>93,000</u>	<u>93,000</u>	<u>98,500</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$627,841	\$687,300	\$668,200	\$698,300	1.6%	\$698,300	\$698,300	\$703,800
<b>Revenue</b>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	0.0%	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>
<b>Net Cost</b>	\$626,341	\$685,800	\$666,700	\$696,800	1.6%	\$696,800	\$696,800	\$702,300
<b>FT Pos.</b>	5	5	5	5	0	5	5	5

## BUDGET ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

### Circuit Court

The Circuit Court is the trial court with the broadest powers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Circuit Court has the original jurisdiction in felony cases, hears appeals from the General District and

JDR Courts, and hears all chancery cases filed in Circuit Court. The county funds its operating expenses and the salaries of its support staff.

### General District Court

General District Court judges are responsible for hearing all criminal, traffic, and civil cases occurring in the county as well as all preliminary hearings in felony cases. The judges disposed of more than 98,000 cases by the end of the 2002 calendar year, which represents a decrease from calendar year 2001 due primarily to a decrease in the number of state police officers assigned to this area. The General District Court Clerk's office is responsible for indexing all court processes, collecting fines and costs assessed, and collecting fees for issuing civil processes. This office is also responsible for assisting the citizens of the county in filing actions in the court

and assisting them in any other matter that they might have before the court. The Clerk's office receives approximately 400 phone calls and assists approximately 350 people per day.

The employees of this court are state employees. The county funds only a portion of the court's operating expenses and a part-time administrative secretary. The FY2004 budget also includes \$4,500 to cover the cost of substitute judge per diem reimbursements. This expense had previously been funded by the state.

# ***COURTS***

## **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court**

The mission of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court is to administer justice in a manner that provides access to proceedings, offers timely processing, and ensures equality, fairness, and integrity. The court hears cases involving juvenile traffic, delinquency, custody, visitation and status offenses, adult misdemeanors, felonies, civil and criminal support, and spousal abuse petitions.

A new, fifth judgeship was created by the state Supreme Court effective July 1, 2001. However, the hiring of additional staff to support this courtroom has not been approved. The JDR Court judges and clerk's office staff are state employees. The county funds only a portion of operating expenses and a part-time administrative secretary.

## **WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

As the county's population continues to expand, so do the demands placed on the county's court system. The courts expect that additional staffing and the utilization of technology advancements will be priority factors in keeping pace with service demands.

The county's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes funding in FY2007 and FY2008 for the expansion of the Circuit and General District Courthouse to accommodate the anticipated increase

in required operating space. The CIP also includes funding for the completion of a sixth courtroom in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in FY2006 in anticipation of the appointment of a sixth judgeship to accommodate the court's rapidly increasing caseload.

The operating impacts for building expansion are reflected in the Buildings and Grounds department narrative.